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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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## A JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

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### THE TEACHER'S OUTFIT IN GERMAN

The most important item in the outfit of a teacher is, unquestionably, a good knowledge of the subject to be taught. Knowledge usually begets enthusiasm and these two can always be left with safety in charge of the class room. They will find out what the best tools are and how to use them, though the process of finding out may involve some waste of time. It is chiefly to avoid this waste that the well-prepared teacher has need of suggestions with respect to his outfit.

Shall I then, in this discussion, address myself exclusively to the well-prepared teacher of German and endeavor to say what I think would be most useful to *him*? That would be the pleasant and the urbane thing to do, but I am persuaded that a somewhat different course will meet more fully the practical needs of the hour.

For the great dominating fact in the situation at the present time is that the vast majority of teachers in the secondary schools of the United States are *not* well prepared for their work and are compelled to lean altogether too heavily upon the maxim *discimus*. They are persons who have taken the regular course, or a part of it, in some high school or college. This means that they have studied the rudiments of dogmatic grammar and written the prescribed number of mechanical exercises; have translated certain selections from a reader, perhaps a few short stories, historical sketches, light comedies, and the like, and have then finished off with the reading of three or four classical dramas. On this capital they have gone out to teach German. Their pronunciation is the more or less slovenly *Schulaussprache* they have picked up on the route and they have not the knowledge of phonetics which would enable them to become intelligent critics

of their own and their pupils' utterance. They cannot speak the language even a little and do not understand it when they hear it spoken. They have no trustworthy feeling for its every-day proprieties, to say nothing of its idiomatic niceties. The writing of an ordinary German letter, the translation into good German of a simple passage of English prose would take them beyond their depth. Their grammatical drill is mechanical and uninspiring because they have no knowledge of the historical developments underlying the facts of usage with which they have to deal. They are without the philological training which would enable them to illuminate the pathway of their pupils with helpful comparisons. And when it comes to the still harder task of teaching literature, they are at a great disadvantage from lack of literary horizon. For what gives to literature its highest interest and its supreme educational value, is its import as a transcript of life. But a feeling for this import comes only with extensive reading in the literature itself.

I am fully aware that we have, in our better schools, a considerable number of teachers to whom this description does not apply; but they are after all few in comparison with the great army of those, to whom, *mutatis mutandis*, it does apply. The situation is much the same for other subjects and it all grows out of our peculiar educational traditions and arrangements which, of course, cannot be changed in a day. This fact, however, only emphasizes the need of the hearty coöperation among teachers for the advancement of professional standards, not in German only, but all along the line. What the mass of our secondary teachers need most is more knowledge of the subjects they teach. I have referred to the state of affairs as it affects German simply to account for the character of this article. For I propose to address myself not to the thoroughly prepared teacher who would be most benefited by somewhat elaborate critical bibliographies of the latest and best works relating to the German language and literature, but rather to the average teacher who is more or less imperfectly prepared. I am going to assume that this average teacher is in some measure conscious of his limitations and anxious to improve himself; and that if he does me the honor to read this article it will be for the purpose of finding out what, in my opinion, he ought to know and why he ought to know it, and

how he can best go to work to meet the demands made upon him. And since the discussion of these matters will require all the space at my disposal, I shall not go very deeply or critically into bibliography, but merely mention under each head a few of the most serviceable works, the names and merits of which will no doubt be familiar to many of my readers. Fuller book-lists with more of comment and criticism for the purposes of the advanced scholar, can be given, if the need should be felt, on some future occasion.

What then does the teacher of German in a good high school need to know and to do, or to have done, in order to be well fitted for his work? Remembering duly that a university specialist will very likely be in danger of putting the standard too high, and making every effort to avoid any unnecessary or Utopian demands, I should answer the question in a general way as follows: Our teacher should have a good command of the language of to-day for the purposes of speaking, reading, and writing; should know something of general phonetics, of historical German grammar, and of the important methodological discussions of recent years with respect to the teaching of modern languages; should have read at least the important works and the lives of the great classical writers and have done some systematic study in the critical and interpretative history of German literature.

To begin with, then, our teacher needs to be able to speak German easily and correctly. In saying this I do not mean to take sides unreservedly with those who contend that he always *should* speak German in the class room. That is a matter which may be left to depend upon circumstances and should be decided after an intelligent survey of the conditions. Under favorable conditions, that is when the class is very small, affording thus abundant opportunity for individual practice in talking, when the pupils are all eager to learn, look upon the lesson as an opportunity and are ready to meet the teacher's efforts half way, that is no doubt the best method. On the other hand with large classes that realize these conditions but imperfectly most teachers will prefer to make a free use of the vernacular. But in any case the teacher should use German more or less in his teaching and should wish to use it more rather than less. To treat it as if it were a mere book-cipher, there only to be translated, to ignore it as a

living vehicle of expression, is certainly not the way to teach German. But the teacher who does not speak the language is almost compelled to do this; he has no choice but to make the lesson consist almost entirely of translation.

I would not seem to undervalue translation. It is an indispensable help and that is an ill-judged reform which proposes to do away with it altogether. But after all it is a means not an end, and the end is German, not English. We want our pupils to learn to feel at home in the foreign tongue; to have an immediate, and not simply a mediate, understanding of it, and along with that a sensitive *feeling* for its proprieties of expression. But this is not to be got from translation alone (though that may help), nor from the study of formal grammar, nor from the writing of Ollendorffian exercises. The pupil needs to hear the language as much as possible, to try his tongue upon it, to have his mistakes corrected over and over, and to compare his modes of expression with his teacher's, until knowledge becomes habit.

Moreover, even if the teacher rejects this reasoning of mine and deems it better, on grounds which seem to him valid, to use English and nothing but English in the class room, he should still be able to speak German for the sense of mastery it gives him. A language is primarily a tool—a means of communication; secondarily it is an object of scientific study for its own sake, and in the third place it is a means of culture through the literature that it holds embalmed. A teacher of it should be able to deal with it in all three of these aspects. One can teach the *Anabasis* acceptably, perhaps, and be at ease in his mind though unable to speak ancient Greek, because no countryman of Xenophon is likely to come along and make unpleasant remarks. With German it is different. One who essays to teach in the schools a language which is used by myriads of his own fellow-citizens as their ordinary means of communication cannot afford to be vulnerable. He should be master of the situation. He should be in a position to choose freely between methods, or to adapt and combine methods, according to his own rational convictions. If he knows the language and bethinks him how he learned it, he will be able to teach it (if he can teach anything), and can watch with calmness from his safe citadel the moving procession of the method-mongers.

“The ability to speak German” is of course a phrase of variable import, ranging from the mastery of a few commonplaces of daily intercourse up to the perfect command of the language for all possible occasions. This last degree of aptitude comes only with long residence abroad and not always even with that. To insist upon it peremptorily would be going too far. It would be to disqualify all but a select few even of the very best American teachers and to put a premium upon teachers of foreign birth; whereas experience shows that the best teacher of a foreign language is a person of the same nationality as his pupils who thoroughly knows the language to be taught; or at any rate a person who has grown to maturity in the land of his pupils and has become intimately familiar not only with their language but with their point of view, their mental habits, and their needs. But while there is no need whatever of insisting that every teacher of German shall be able to speak German as if it were his mother-tongue, it is quite in order to urge the importance of residence abroad as a part of the teacher's preparation. Really there is nothing that can take the place of it. Summer schools cannot do it, nor private lessons, nor manuals of conversation, nor board and lodging with a German family. What is needed is the foreign environment, the foreign life, of which the language is the product and its literature the expression. I wish to urge with great emphasis, therefore, that every one who wishes to fit himself properly for the teaching of German should include in his plans a residence of at least a year in Germany. The time is surely coming when this will be generally treated by school authorities as an indispensable condition. Indeed it is so treated even now in the best schools.

But it will be said that residence abroad costs money and is, on other grounds, not every one's affair. The question is, then, What is the next best thing? How can one who is actually at work teaching, and needs to keep at work, best improve his practical command of the language? Beyond question the next best expedient is frequent and long-continued association with a German friend who speaks his language perfectly and can be induced for love, or money, or exchange of English for German, to take up the cross and devote himself to the incidental teaching of his mother-tongue. I say “incidental” because I have in mind now

the needs of persons who already possess considerable book knowledge of the language and do not require formal lessons, but simply practice for ear and tongue; who need only to talk and to hear talk on all sorts of subjects as they arise. The instruction of such persons will be most efficient in proportion as it is got incidentally and is "free from the taint of professionalism," as our college athletes say. It can be given best in an evening call, a visit to the theatre, a walk through the fields, a row upon the river. The "teacher", if he knows his business, will simply rattle on in a perfectly natural way without condescending to his pupil's level and with no great solicitude about being fully understood. He will of course ask questions and try to draw his pupil out and will then quietly correct mistakes by saying the same thing over presently in the right way. And the "pupil" on his part, must forget, so far as possible, his English and his science and put himself in the attitude of a child; he must *hear* what is said to him and imitate what he hears without risking any Icarus-flights of his own. If he does not understand he should, ordinarily, let it go; he will understand the next time, or the third, or the fifth. Linguistic explanations which continually remind one's interlocutor of one's ignorance are a great damper upon the easy flow of talk.

Anyone who is lucky enough to secure a right good teacher of this unprofessional kind will make better progress than the most of those who go abroad and there devote themselves to book-study, to lectures, or to formal language-lessons. The success of this method depends largely, of course, upon the character of the teacher: he needs to be companionable and talkative and not too far removed in age or interest from his pupil. A difference of sex is no objection. Above all he (or she) must command the language perfectly. Speaking German "for mutual benefit" with anyone who is himself a learner does not result in mutual benefit, but, usually, in the confirmation of bad habits. Nor is there any profit to be had from talking with Americans (at clubs, conversazioni, or elsewhere) who speak German in a halting unidiomatic way or murder it with sin-laden fluency.

But suppose that the right sort of teacher is not to be had: what is the next best expedient? Is there any form of self-instruction that can be resorted to with profit? One thinks here of

the phrase-books and manuals of conversation. Since talking is an art depending upon practice, it is evidently not to be learned from books. Still a good phrase-book has its uses, since it can give, if not facility of expression, at least a knowledge of colloquial forms, and that is something. The difficulty is that the most of the extant collections are not good because they do not reflect the natural spontaneous language of every-day life. They are in the Ollendorff vein, and hence not available outside of the nursery; or they are designed to meet the needs of the tourist. They generally contain, along with some matter which is good and helpful, a great deal that is stilted, priggish, or otherwise unnatural. It was therefore a happy thought of Prof. Johan Storm, of the university of Christiania, to prepare a phrase-book that should not be open to these objections. His dialogues were prepared first in French, revised by experts to the manner born, then translated into various European languages and again revised by experts with respect to idiomatic naturalness of expression. An English version of this collection is thus far lacking, but the French-German edition\* is, so far as my knowledge goes, the best German phrase-book we have and the only one which can lay claim to real scientific merit.

No phrase-book, however, can be of much use unless the study of it is supplemented by much reading of such literature as reflects the language of common life. Realistic stories of the present time are best for the purpose. An excellent method of self-instruction is to select an extract from such a story, write out a free idiomatic translation of it, put the translation aside for a few weeks until the exact phraseology of the original has been forgotten, and then re-translate into German and compare with the original. Such work, if kept up conscientiously for a long time and with all sorts of authors, will do more for one than a course in German composition under any but a very superior teacher.

The ability to speak a language carries with it, in a general way, the ability to write and to read it. Speaking is much the most difficult attainment of the three. I do not, therefore, need to deal with the subject of miscellaneous reading done merely by way of learning to read without translating, but may come at

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\* Französische Sprechübungen. Von Johan Storm. Leipzig. 1887.

once to our second requirement, which was, it will be remembered, an elementary knowledge of phonetics.

There is a school of reformers,\* who contend that a course in phonetics should always form the basis of instruction in a living language; that the pupil should first learn the sounds of the language, and then practise for weeks or months in reading phonetically transcribed texts before he is introduced to the ordinary spelling. This, in my opinion, is going to extremes. Such a method, reduced to practice in the schools, would occasion endless confusion, bewilderment, and loss of time, and in the end would give no better results than to begin at once with the usual spelling. The beginner in a language has difficulties enough to meet without our overwhelming him at the threshold with a mass of phonetic technicalities. At the same time he can be taught and should be taught, from the first, how the foreign sounds are made and how they differ from those English sounds with which he will be apt to confound them. To do this the teacher himself needs some knowledge of the physiology of speech. Such knowledge will add zest to his teaching of pronunciation by making it a matter of scientific interest instead of a tedious mechanical drill. Above all it will enable him to ground his pupils upon a more solid foundation than the uncertain imitation of what they think they hear.†

A knowledge of historical German grammar is perhaps the least indispensable of the requirements above laid down. It is a large

\* See W. Vietor's now famous pamphlet *Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren*, Heilbronn, 1887; also *Die Reform des fremdsprachlichen Unterrichts*, von J. Bierbaum, Cassel, 1886; the same writer's *Die analytisch-direkte Methode*, Cassel, 1887; and *Die praktische Spracherlernung*, von Felix Franke, Leipzig, 1890. These pamphlets are mentioned here as stimulating reading and sources of information with respect to an important reform agitation now going on in Germany. I would not be understood as approving all their theories and positions.

† For an easy introduction to phonetics consult the article "Elements of English Pronunciation" by Prof. W. D. Whitney in Vol. 2 of his *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*; then Sweet's *Primer of Phonetics*, London, 1893. For English-German phonetics the best works are Vietor's *German Pronunciation*, Heilbronn, 1885; and the same author's larger *Elemente der Phonetik*, Heilbronn, 1887; and Grandgent's *German Sounds*, Boston, Ginn & Co., 1892. An excellent new book in German phonetics is Bremer's *Deutsche Phonetik*, Leipzig, 1893. Siever's *Phonetik*, Leipzig, (4th ed.) 1893 is the best book on general phonetics, but is hard reading.

specialty by itself and cannot be carried very far to advantage without some knowledge of Old and Middle High German, Gothic, and Anglo-Saxon. But the teacher who is informed along these lines will find his information relevant in many ways to the work of the class room. It will give added interest to his teaching of dogmatic grammar by enabling him to comprehend and thus to throw light upon many facts and phenomena which would otherwise appear capricious and inexplicable. It will enable him to use his etymological dictionary intelligently and to give needed help upon the formation and meaning of words. It will furnish criteria for judging the conflicting facts of modern usage.\*

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\* Of our school grammars Brandt's (Boston, 1888,) is the only one which professes to deal with the language historically. It contains a large amount of information very concisely stated. A good introduction to the subject is furnished in Behaghel's *Deutsche Sprache*, (Leipzig, 1886,) of which a translation by Trechmann has lately (1891) been published by Macmillan & Co. under the title *A Short Historical Grammar of the German Language*. A larger work (880 pages), designed with direct reference to the needs of school teachers in Germany is Blatz' *Neuhochdeutsche Grammatik mit Berücksichtigung der historischen Entwicklung*, Tauberbischofsheim, 1880. This is, on the whole, the best single work for the teacher's purposes, though it is rather diffuse, and here and there behind the times. It will be superseded, no doubt, by Wilmann's *Deutsche Grammatik* (Gotisch Alt-,Mittel-,und Neuhochdeutsch), Strassburg, 1893, of which the first of the four proposed parts has already appeared. An excellent book from which to study the relation between the actual usage of to-day and the dogmas of the grammarians is Andresen's *Sprachgebrauch und Sprachrichtigkeit im Deutschen*, Heilbronn, 1887. A suggestive new book upon syntax is Wunderlich's *Der deutsche Satzbau*, 1893.

I subjoin here a few notes upon dictionaries. The Grimm, dictionary, the great work of German lexicography, of which Vol. I appeared in 1854, is still far from completion. Vol. 12, on the letter V, is now appearing, but several preceding volumes are still incomplete. The twentieth century will be well under way before the end is reached.—Sander's *Woerterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*, Leipzig, 1860-65, with supplemental volume in 1880, is a ponderous work (four 4to vols.) containing endless wealth of citation from modern authors, but hard to work with because of bad typography and inconvenient arrangement.—The most serviceable for ordinary purposes of the all-German dictionaries is the new *Deutsches Woerterbuch* of Heyne, Leipzig, 1889.—It is planned for 3 vols. of about 1,200 pp. each, but can be easily bound in two. Five of the six half-volumes have now appeared. Gives etymologies, development of meaning, and to some extent pronunciation.—Of German-English dictionaries

We come now to the boundless field of literature. No one can read everything in a great national literature the history of which extends over a thousand years. It is necessary to make a selection, to confine one's study within limits and to remain in ignorance of much. What I would especially urge, however, is that every teacher should study *something*—something more, too, than the particular work he is teaching from day to day. He needs for his work the invigoration that comes only from fresh intellectual acquisitions. It is a deadening, if not a deadly, pedagogical sin to teach the same work year after year, in the same way, and never read anything else for the enlargement of one's own horizon. The growing pupil needs a growing teacher. Let the teacher always have, therefore, some serious literary study of his own, some author, or group of authors, or movement, about which he shall aim to inform himself thoroughly. Let him work up the literature of this specialty, collect books and pamphlets, and try to become an authority upon it. I am not now preaching the importance of an ideal devotion to science, though there might be room for a sermon on that subject; I am simply recommending the best of all known prophylactics for the worst of all pedagogical maladies—mental stagnation. It is better than attending teachers' conventions, though those are good—when they *are* good.

The most profitable kind of collateral work for one who is engaged in teaching the classics is study devoted to the lives and works of the great classical writers. The teacher should have at hand a good edition of Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller,\* and should

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the best is now the new Flügel, Braunschweig, 1891. The English part in two volumes is much fuller and better than the German-English part in one volume.—A work which no teacher should be without access to is Kluge's *Etymologisches Woerterbuch*, Strassburg, fifth ed., 1893, the best of all etymological dictionaries. The best manual of synonyms is Eberhard's *Synonymisches Woerterbuch*, 14 Aufl. besorgt von O. Lyon. Gives equivalents in English, French, Italian, and Russian.—For a dictionary of foreign terms the best service will be rendered, on the whole, by Heyse's *Fremdwörterbuch*, Hannover, 1879.

\* Among the multitudinous editions of the classical poets the average teacher will be best served, upon the whole, by that belonging to the collection known as "Kürschner's Deutsche National-Litteratur," published by W. Spemann of Stuttgart. It is well printed, and well edited, has good introductions to the separate works and judicious help-notes at

become familiar, at first hand, with their important works. No other knowledge is so helpful to the teacher of literature as that which brings him into full intellectual sympathy with his author, that which feeds and develops the historical imagination, enabling one to make the author's life-journey with him, to participate in his spiritual development, to look out, at any given time, with *his* eyes upon *his* world, and thus to think his thought and feel his feeling over after him.

Finally, the teacher should do some systematic study in the history of German literature as a whole. It is true that such studies, so far as they relate to the earlier periods, are, to the teacher of the classics, less vitally important than the studies just dealt with. But after all, life, which literature reflects, is continuous. The intellectual tradition of a people is a flowing river and not a canal with locks. One cannot know Goethe well without knowing something of the sixteenth, as well as a great deal of the eighteenth century; and when one comes to the later Romantic movement from which our modern realism is a reaction, —to the Romantic movement, with its more or less spurious mediævalism, then one needs to know what the actual Middle Age was like. Studies in the history of literature widen one's outlook, correct one's perspective, discipline one's judgment, and give one a deeper sense of what it means to be an "heir of all the ages." And knowledge which cultivates the teacher will tell sooner or

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the foot of the page. The standard critical edition of Goethe is the "Weimar edition," (Hermann Böhlan, Weimar), of which some fifty volumes have appeared. The standard edition of Lessing is the Lachmann-Muncker edition, now issuing from the press of G. J. Göschen, of Stuttgart; that of Schiller, the historisch-kritische Ausgabe in 17 volumes, edited by Goedeke and published by Cotta, of Stuttgart. The best book upon Goethe thus far is Hermann Grimm's *Vorlesungen über Goethe*, Berlin, 1880, translated by Sarah Holland Adams and published by Little, Brown & Co., of Boston, under the title *Life and Times of Goethe*. The best book upon Lessing is that of Erich Schmidt, Berlin, Weidmann, 1884-92; upon Schiller, that of J. Minor, Berlin, Weidmann, 1890, which is not yet complete. These last are elaborate critical biographies giving the latest results of German science, and not very easy reading. Very good little books for the school library are those published in the "Great Writers" series by Walter Scott, of London.—*Goethe*, by Sime, *Lessing*, by Rolleston, and *Schiller*, by Nevinson, each of which contains in an appendix, a very good bibliography of its subject.

later, in all sorts of subtle and unexpected ways, in the work of the school-room. As Emerson puts it: "There is a certain loftiness of thought and power to marshal and adjust particulars, which can only come from an insight of their whole connection."\*

Calvin Thomas

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## AN EXPERIMENT IN SCHEDULE MAKING

The admirable plan outlined by the Committee of Ten and their associates has not yet become a practical, living fact. This consummation may never be reached and certainly cannot be without the generous coöperation of all our leading universities. An account of an early attempt to make a working schedule along the lines laid down by the Committee, may be of interest to the readers of the *SCHOOL REVIEW*.

At the beginning of the second semester, January 29, 1894, Michigan Military Academy adopted as many features of Table IV of the Committee's report as were practicable without interfering with the college preparation of the junior and senior classes. The increase in the number of subjects and the decrease in the periods per week in individual studies, at first caused some confusion, but eventually presented no greater objections than are incident to the same system in the universities.

In order to test the capabilities of the students, some were allowed to take twenty 45-minute periods of prepared work per week and none less than fifteen. Of the 37 who began with 20 p., 18 have carried the work successfully. The average number of periods at first was 17 1-2 and is now reduced to 16 1-2. During this experiment students have been allowed to drop studies when,

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\* The most brilliant book upon the history of German literature is Scherer's *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur*, Berlin, 1883, translated by Mrs. Conybeare and published in two volumes by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. A more serviceable work for the early stages of one's study is Königs *Deutsche Litteraturgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1881, which gives good analyses of the works discussed, covers the whole field down to the present time, and has a large number of helpful illustrations.